



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012**

Monday, October 17, 2011

10:00 AM

Present: Chair Curry, Vice Chair Berger, Vice Chair Kang, Vice Chair Friedman, Commissioner Biondi, Commissioner Franzen, Commissioner Kleinberg, Commissioner Murray, Commissioner Olivas, Commissioner Rudnick, Commissioner Sorkin, Commissioner Trevino-Powell and Commissioner Williams

Excused: Commissioner McClaney and Commissioner Savelle

1. Call to order. (11-4551)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Curry at 10:07 a.m.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

2. Introduction of October 17, 2011, meeting attendees. (11-4552)

Self-introductions were made.

3. Approval of the Agenda of October 17, 2011 (11-4553)

On motion of Commissioner Kleinberg, seconded by Commissioner Sorkin (Commissioners Kang, McClaney, Olivas, and Savelle being absent), the agenda for the October 17, 2011, was approved.

4. Approval of the Minutes from the meetings of August 15, 2011 and October 3, 2011. (11-4554)

On motion of Commissioner Kleinberg, seconded by Vice-Chair Friedman (Commissioners Kang, McClaney, Olivas, and Savelle being absent), the Commission took approved the minutes of October 3, 2011 as submitted.

On motion of Commission Sorkin, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg, (Commissioners Kang, McClaney, Olivas, and Savelle being absent), the Commission approved the minutes of August 15, 2011, with the changes recommended by Commissioner Sorkin.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT 8-15-11](#)
 [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT 10-3-11](#)

II. REPORTS

5. Chair's Report by Patricia Curry, Chair, for October 17, 2011. (11-4555)

Chair Curry reported the following:

- **The Commission's Annual Retreat is scheduled for November 7, 2011. Commissioner Kang is securing a location. Commissioners are encouraged to submit discussion topics for the retreat to Chair Curry as soon as possible.**
- **The Commission's Holiday Luncheon is tentatively scheduled for December 5, 2011. Commissioner Sorkin has secured a venue. Additional information will be forthcoming.**
- **A draft of the Commission's 2010-11 Annual Report will be forwarded to Commissioners for their review. Revisions or recommendations should be forwarded to Chair Curry prior to the Commission's Annual Retreat.**
- **The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department have both responded to the Grand Jury report; Commission staff will forward a copy of the report to Commissioners.**

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection (Commissioners McClaney and Savelle being absent), this item was received and filed.

III. DISCUSSIONS

6. Discussion and approval of a letter to the Board of Supervisors regarding the Mental Health Transition Age Youth (TAY) Workgroup. (11-4607)

Vice-Chair Friedman reported that the intention of the letter to the Board of Supervisors (Board) regarding the Mental Health Transition Age Youth (TAY) Workgroup was to update the Board on the collaboration between the Commission and the Department of Mental Health. In addition, the letter signifies the progress the Mental Health TAY Workgroup has made in the past year.

After discussion, on motion of Commissioner Kleinberg, seconded by Commissioner Williams (Commissioners McClaney and Savelle being absent), the letter to the Board was approved with the following changes as suggested by Commissioner Sorkin:

Page 1, first sentence, first paragraph of the letter was revised to read as follows:

We are writing to ~~you~~ your Honorable Board about an exciting collaboration between the Commission for Children and Families (Commission) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH). This collaboration has resulted in very positive results.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

IV. PRESENTATIONS

7. Presentation by Patricia Ploehn, Assistant Chief Executive Officer and Commissioner Kleinberg on the Education Coordinating Council's (ECC) Strategic Plan for Fiscal Year 2011-14. (11-3550)

In addition to Ms. Patricia Ploehn, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Jennifer Hottenroth, Assistant Division Chief DCFS and Kathleen Malaske-Samu, Office of Child Care, Chief Executive Office, were available to present on the Education Coordinating Council's (ECC) Strategic Plan for Fiscal Year 2011-14. Copies of the following documents titled, "*County of Los Angeles Education Coordinating Council Strategic Plan Update 2011-2014*," "*ECC Updated Strategic Plan FY 2011-14: Priority Areas and Outcomes*," and "*With AB 194, Foster Youth Now Eligible for Priority College Enrollment*" were distributed and discussed.

Ms. Ploehn reported the following:

- The ECC was created by the Board in 2005. The ECC's mission is to raise the educational achievement of children and youth served by DCFS and the Probation Department so that they may have positive futures.
 - In 2006 the ECC developed a five-year strategic plan that was completed in January 2011. The ECC completed and approved its Fiscal Year (FY) 2011-14 Strategic Plan on May 26, 2011. The updated plan highlights five priority areas and outcomes that the ECC will be working on.
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Five priority areas and outcomes of the ECC Strategic Plan 2011-2014 include:

Priority Area 1: Early Childhood Education

- **Outcome:** At least 90% of young DCFS children under the age of six and the children of DCFS and Probation youth participate in high-quality early care and education programs.

Priority Area 2: Youth Education and Development

- **Outcome #1:** Educational programs provided to youth in juvenile halls and camps will be reformed so that they significantly increase student academic achievement.
- **Outcome #2:** System youth participate in after-school and summer enrichment activities that offer a variety of learning experiences, enhance social/emotional well-being, and provide opportunities for them to build positive and enduring relationships with caring adults.
- **Outcome #3:** DCFS and Probation youth successfully transition to preschool, elementary school, middle school, high school, adult education, vocational school, and college, and smoothly transfer between schools.
- **Outcome #4:** Prevent/reduce school truancy and engage truant youth in safe and welcoming educational programs.

Priority Area 3: School/Department Coordination and Support

- **Outcome:** Departments and schools work in concert to provide system youth with the education and supports they need to attain future success.

Priority Area 4: Data and Information Sharing

- **Outcome:** Share education information electronically across systems

Priority Area 5: System Accountability

- **Outcome:** Courts regularly track and monitor youths' educational plans and progress and hold accountable those most responsible for youth's increased educational achievement including child welfare workers, Probation Officers, attorneys, caregivers, parents, school personnel, and the youth themselves.

After further discussion, Ms. Ploehn added the following:

- **Priority Area 2 highlights the importance of after-school programs which offer students an opportunity to excel in something that is outside of their regular studies. Due to the current economic climate, funding for many after-school programs has been curtailed or eliminated. The ECC recognized the importance of these programs, and because the funding for after-school programs has been reduced, the ECC on October 27, 2011, will meet with the Directors of the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, Public Library, and a group of after-school providers to discuss collaborative efforts to ensure youth have extracurricular activities.**
- **Priority Area 2 also highlights the importance for youth to have an adult to help them transition; whether it is from preschool to elementary or from middle to high school, youth need an adult to help them smoothly transition.**

Priority Area 2 also focuses on truancy. Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court, Judge Michael Nash, established a Committee called “Reducing Truancy.” The Committee includes a representative from the ECC and other various stakeholders who meet once a month to discuss strategies to prevent/reduce truancy.

- **Priority Area 3 highlights that the County and school districts must work together. Supervisor Gloria Molina’s Education Program for Foster Youth is successful example of what can be accomplished through collaboration.**

The ECC is hopeful to facilitate the expansion of the Gloria Molina Foster Youth Education Program and similar models that:

- **Develop and implement individual, specialized educational plans for participating students.**
- **Recover credits for youth with multiple school placements. Over 1,100 credits have been recovered in the past year.**
- **Support family/caregiver involvement and connections with caring adults.**
- **Link youth with tutoring and other support services.**
- **Improve the quality of student transitions to postsecondary education settings.**
- **Reduce barriers to school enrollment.**

- **Priority Area 4 highlights the need to share education information across systems electronically. There are two issues preventing the sharing of education information. The first issue is the legal ability to share information. However, through the collaborative efforts of DCFS, ECC and the courts, language was included in the Dependency Court minute orders that allows for the sharing of school district educational records with Probation Officers, and attorneys. The ECC is hopeful that the same language will be included in the Delinquency Court minute orders.**

The second issue is developing a system to electronically share the information across systems. There are significant efforts across County departments to develop a system to electronically share information.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. Ploehn added the following:

- **In reference to the ECC's FY 2011-14 Strategic Plan Priority Area 2 "DCFS and Probation youth successfully transition to preschool..." refers to the children of DCFS and Probation youth.**
- **There have been discussions on the effectiveness of sending juveniles to Probation Camps for three months because they violated their probation by being truant. Ms. Ploehn is aware, but is not certain if anything has been done regarding that issue.**
- **Developing an educational plan for every child under the care of DCFS and Probation is essential to their future success.**

Ms. Hottenroth shared a document titled "*DCFS Children Ages Birth to 4 Years Old*," and reported the following:

- **As of August 31, 2011, DCFS has 11,238 in-home and out-of-home caseloads for children between the ages 0-4, 6,484 children between the ages of 0-2 and 4,414 children between the ages of 3-4. These numbers represent an increase from 2010 when DCFS had 10,558 children between the ages of 0-4.**
- **The California Department of Education provides DCFS with an allotment of funding to serve its at-risk population of children between the ages 0-11. DCFS subsidizes child care for those families. During 2010, DCFS provided subsidized child care for approximately 5,000 children between the ages of 0-5.**

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- In 2011 DCFS received a 24 percent reduction in the amount of funding for subsidized child care. Although there is a reduction in the amount of funding, DCFS recognizes the importance of enrolling children in these programs. There are 289 children of foster youth and 260 of those 289 children are between the ages of 0-2.
 - DCFS had an electronic central eligibility list which families were able to be connected to resources and referral agencies to receive services. The 289 foster youth with children were given priority and moved to the front of the list to receive services. Unfortunately, due to reduction in funding, the electronic central eligibility list is no longer available. As a result, closer collaboration between DCFS and all of its partner agencies will be needed to identify where the openings in quality programs are to ensure that the at-risk foster youth with children may be referred to those programs.
 - In 2010, DCFS began a pilot program to increase enrollment in the Head Start Program. Working with three of the DCFS regional offices, a list was populated that included every youth between the ages of 3-4. Children Social Workers (CSWs) met with each family on the list to inform them of the Head Start Program. As result of CSWs' efforts, 300 families were referred to the Head Start Program. Due to the lengthy timelines involved with manually enrolling families, an electronic system was developed in May 2011 to help expedite enrollment into the Head Start Program. The electronic enrollment resulted in 1,138 families enrolling in the Head Start program in only two months. Although the electronic system was a success, it is only the first step.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. Hottenroth added the following:

- DCFS plans to include the 0-3 year olds in the early Head Start Program through the electronic enrollment system. DCFS must first identify how many spots the 0-3 population will need. DCFS will include families receiving Family Preservation when it begins a pilot project with the South Bay Center for Counseling.

Ms. Malaske-Samu reported the following:

- The most recent data regarding parenting juvenile probationers is from 2005. In 2005 a survey was conducted among juvenile probation girls which revealed that 214 teen girls were mothers and 96 were pregnant. The CEO's Office of Education is working with the Probation Departments Juvenile section to bring child development resources to Probation Officers.

The ECC, under its “Self-Sufficiency” plan is working to identify strategies to help these young parents. Recommendations have been made to modify the “Multi-Disciplinary Action Plan” forms and the “Transition” forms to include language inquiring if the juvenile is a parent. In addition, as a result of the update to the Childcare Policy Framework, the Probation Department was added to the Policy Roundtable for Childcare.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection (Commissioners McClaney and Savelle being absent), this item was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

8. Presentation by Jacquelyn McCroskey, DSW, John Milner Professor of Child Welfare University of Southern California School of Social Work on the Strengthening Families Approach. (11-4575)

Dr. McCroskey distributed copies of the following documents, “*Strengthening Families: Creating a New Normal*,” Memo dated July 18, 2011 from William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer to the Board regarding Implementing the Strengthening Families Approach – Recommendations for Los Angeles County and “*Los Angeles County Child Care Policy Framework 2011-2013, Promoting Healthy Children, Strong Families and Vibrant Communities*”

Dr. McCroskey reported the following:

- **Strengthening Families Illinois began as part of Strengthening Families Through Early Care and Education. In 2002, with funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Center for the Study for Social Policy (CSSP) set out to develop a strategic, feasible approach to child abuse prevention. Through extensive research and conversations with practitioners in child welfare, family support, and early childhood, CSSP identified five positive attributes, referred to as Protective Factors, which are linked to lower incidence of child abuse and neglect. The Protective Factors are:**
 - ***Parental Resilience***
 - ***Social Connections***
 - ***Concrete Support in Time of Need***
 - ***Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development***
 - ***Social and Emotional Competence of Children***

- In 2004, CSSP solicited proposals from states throughout the country to pilot Strengthening Families through Early Care and Education, a child abuse prevention strategy based on the Protective Factors. Proposals from Illinois and six other states were selected. In 2005, the Illinois Department of Children and Families (IDCFS) convened more than 20 collaborative partner organizations and state agencies, child welfare, child abuse prevention, family support, early childhood education as well as parents and community leaders to promote the protective factors across systems and settings. Now known as Strengthening Families Illinois (SFI), the collaboration continues to be chaired by the Director of IDCFS.

Mr. Erwin McEwen, Director of Illinois DCFS is cited as reporting at a Strengthening Families Leadership Summit that:

“DCFS should not be in the business of raising children, but in the business of strengthening families.”

- Using the Strengthening Families Approach, more than 30 states are shifting policy, funding and training to help programs working with children and families build Protective Factors with families. Many states and counties also use the Protective Factors Framework to align services for children and families.

The LA Partnership for Early Childhood Investment is a champion of Strengthening Families. First 5 LA adopted the Strengthening Families Approach prior to implementing its Partnerships for Families Program and has actively incorporated these principles and activities into its strategies for preventing child maltreatment. The Strengthening Families Approach has influenced the work of the ECC, most notably the ECC’s focus on early childhood education.

- In 2009, the first Los Angeles County Child Care Policy Framework (Framework) was approved by the Board on January 6, 2009 and was developed to close the gap between what we know and what we do to support the healthy development of young children, their families, and our communities. The Framework 2011-2013 approved by the Board on March 29, 2011 builds on those successes by adding five goals.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection (Commissioners McClaney and Savelle being absent), this item was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

9. Presentation by Jenny Vinopal, Director, Outreach and Community Development, California Youth Connection (CYC). (11-4556)

Ms. Vinopal reported the following:

- **The California Youth Connection was founded in 1988 by a group of foster youth and supportive adults to provide a vehicle for California foster youth to learn leadership and advocacy skills and to engage directly with policymakers to improve the foster care system. Founded on the model of youth empowerment, more than twenty years later, CYC maintains a dual focus on policy and youth development. CYC is the only organization in California to engage foster youth in the policy making process, and is now a National model.**
- **Every year, CYC serves more than 500 foster youth members, ages 14-24, through 33 county-based chapters throughout the state. Core CYC activities include: training members on legislative and policy advocacy, educating policymakers and providers about foster youth's experiences, presenting members' recommendations for legislative and policy changes, and providing input to county and state policymakers as they work to implement policy changes and improve the foster care system. CYC is headquartered in San Francisco with satellite offices in Los Angeles and Sacramento. CYC has a staff of 14.5 full time employees and a budget of \$1.47-million.**

The CYC Youth have organized to accomplish the following legislative gains:

- **Extension of Foster Care Services Until Age 21 – CYC celebrated the landmark passage of AB 12 (Bass and Bealle, Chapter 559, Statutes of 2010). CYC partnered with child welfare advocacy organizations for 2 years to ensure the passage of AB 12.**
- **AB 212- Beall (Signed by Governor 10/4/11) AB 212 redesigned the re-entry provision in AB 12 (2010) so that a youth who do not want to participate in extended foster care is discharged from the dependency system.**
- **AB 194- Beall (Signed by Governor 10/4/11) requires California Community Colleges (CCC) and the California State University (CSU), and requests the University of California (UC), give priority enrollment in classes to foster youth or former foster youth up to 24 years of age.**

- **Extended Medi-Cal for Former Foster Youth – Thanks to CYC and other child advocates, California was one of the first states in the country to take advantage of a new federal program that allows states to extend Medi-Cal for former foster youth until the age of 21. This law eliminates the re-application process that emancipated youth previously had to go through in order to get health care. This law change was enacted through the state budget and AB 2877 (Thompson, Chapter 93, Statutes of 2000).**
- **Driver's Licenses – AB 2691 (Areias, Chapter 865, Statutes of 1992) allows someone other than a child's parents or guardians to sign the child's application for a driver's license.**
- **Maintaining Sibling Togetherness – On September 29, 2000 Governor Davis signed AB 1987 (Steinberg, Chapter 909, Statutes of 2000). This law requires social workers to include in court reports a section on the child's sibling relationships and the plans for visitation of siblings. It also requires social workers to notify children on their caseload of significant events in the lives of siblings.**

On October 29, 2011, the CYC is hosting an event to meet CYC supporters and to recruit new members. Ms. Vinopal is hopeful that the Commission could share this information with their constituents.

In response to questions posed by the Commission Ms. Vinopal added the following:

- **The CYC is currently working on legislation for a mental health bill of rights. The CYC works very closely with its partners to ensure that youth are aware of the resources available to them.**
- **The CYC has considered outreach to high schools and currently has a model at Elk Grove High School in Sacramento where they host a club for foster youth. In Los Angeles, the CYC has partnered with the Los Angeles County Office of Education and the ECC to ensure that foster youth are fully aware of the resources available to them.**

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection (Commissioners McClaney and Savelle being absent), this item was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

10. DCFS Interim Director's Report by Philip L. Browning, Interim Director, DCFS. (11-4557)

Interim Director Browning reported the following:

- **DCFS continues to move forward with Assembly Bill 12 (AB 12). Approximately half of the cases identified as eligible for AB 12 have been reviewed and DCFS has approximately a 40 percent conversion rate which is consistent with the rest of the State. DCFS is hopeful that all of the cases will be reviewed by the end of the year.**
- **DCFS continues to work with the Katie A. panel. Interim Director Browning is hopeful that there will be resources available to replicate the Gloria Molina Education Project countywide.**
- **Interim Director Browning recently met several foster teens living in a group home. The foster teens indicated that they needed mentors and the foster teens that had mentors revealed the positive difference influence it had on them. The foster teens also indicated their desire to work. Perhaps there will be some funds available through the Title IV-E Waiver to fund jobs.**
- **DCFS has started its Data Dashboard Project. The Department of Social Services has a strong data-driven system, which hopefully can be replicated at DCFS.**
- **The DCFS Strategic Plan is currently being reviewed and Interim Director Browning requested that the Commission review and offer any recommendations.**

In response to questions posed by the Commission Interim Director Browning added the following:

- **Several elements of the Systems Improvement Plan will be integrated in the Strategic Plan such as; the Title IV-E Waiver and the Katie A. lawsuit; however, Interim Director Browning indicated that the Strategic Plan will not be the only source that DCFS will use.**
- **DCFS currently has approximately 1,000 Dragon Speak software units. Dragon Speak is a speech recognition software that converts spoken language into text. However, Interim Director Browning discovered that only a few employees are actually using the software.**

- Therefore Interim Director Browning proposed the creation of a training seminar so staff can be acclimated in using Dragon Speak. DCFS is hopeful that the software can eventually be used on a smart phone or other mobile device.
- The Data-Dashboard is a software tool that allows users to look at data in a different manner. The value of this process is not the format that it comes in, but the discussion on how to drive down or up the data that is being reviewed.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection (Commissioners McClaney and Savelle being absent), this item was received and filed.

V. MISCELLANEOUS

Matters Not Posted

11. Matters not on the posted agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (11-4558)

There were none.

Announcements

12. Announcements for the meeting of October 17, 2011. (11-4559)

There were none.

Public Comment

13. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (11-4561)

No members of the public addressed the Commission.

Adjournment

14. Adjournment for the meeting of October 17, 2011. (11-4560)

The meeting was adjourned at 12:07 p.m.